

**Developing Phonological Awareness to Improve Interpersonal Communicative Interactions
in 10th Grade High School Students at Villa del Socorro high school.**

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ABSTRACT

This action research project explores the impact of phonological awareness training on improving interpersonal communicative interactions among tenth-grade students at a public high school in Medellin, Colombia. Despite national initiatives to promote English proficiency, many Colombian students, particularly in public schools, struggle with oral communication due to limited pronunciation training and considerable levels of foreign language anxiety (FLA). Grounded in socio-cultural and phonological processing theories, this study aimed to bridge the gap by integrating a ten-week intervention focused on phonological awareness training regarding English pronunciation.

Using qualitative methodology framed within Kemmis and McTaggart action research cycle, the intervention engaged 96 students through contextualized activities like rhyming, syllable segmentation, minimal pairs and communicative tasks. A purposive sample of seven students was assessed through pre and posttests, surveys, classroom observations and field diaries. results show notable improvements in phonological accuracy, speech intelligibility, and student's confidence in initiating conversation using English language.

The findings suggest that systematic phonological awareness training not only enhances pronunciation but also fosters communicative competence and reduces FLA. The results highlight the pedagogical value of embedding phonological instruction in the EFL curriculum to support more meaningful and confident use of English in real-life contexts.

Key Words: phonological awareness, pronunciation, foreign language anxiety, intelligibility, interpersonal communication, EFL, action research

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I. INTRODUCTION OR BACKGROUND

Over the last two decades, Colombia has prioritized the enhancement of English language instruction through national policies like the National Bilingualism Program (NBP), aiming to elevate English proficiency across all educational levels. Despite these initiatives, a significant number of students, particularly in public institutions, continue to struggle with oral communication. In Medellín, the local government's push to establish the city as a bilingual district further underscores the urgency of addressing this issue. Within this evolving context, students at Villa del Socorro High School—located in a linguistically dynamic area near the Acevedo metro station—find themselves in proximity to real-world opportunities for English use, particularly with tourists and expatriates.

Yet, classroom practices remain heavily grammar-oriented, with limited emphasis on pronunciation or speaking skills. The observed gap between policy intent and practical outcomes presents an important area for pedagogical inquiry. Students' limited oral proficiency, influenced by factors such as phonological unawareness and foreign language anxiety (FLA), hampers their participation in meaningful communication, both within and beyond school walls.

This research was prompted by a recurring observation: students' inability or reluctance to use English for basic communication in real-life or classroom contexts. Despite five hours of weekly instruction, learners demonstrated low confidence, minimal engagement, and significant pronunciation challenges, which negatively impacted intelligibility and interpersonal communication. Consequently, the central problem addressed in this research is the lack of oral proficiency among EFL learners, particularly as it relates to phonological awareness and anxiety.

As a public school English teacher in Medellín, my interest in this topic stems from daily interactions with learners who show potential yet remain silenced by fear and inadequate instructional focus. Observing students retreat from oral tasks due to pronunciation issues or anxiety illuminated the need to design instructional practices that actively support their communicative development. I believe that fostering phonological awareness is not only essential for intelligibility but also a gateway to building learners' confidence and willingness to communicate.

This study was conducted with 96 tenth-grade students at Villa del Socorro High School. Through a purposive sample of seven students, it implemented a 10-week intervention to explore the development of phonological awareness and its impact on students' ability to engage in interpersonal communication. Rooted in socio-cultural and phonological processing theories, the study targeted pronunciation skills through activities like minimal pairs, rhyming, blending, and role-playing.

This work aligns with ongoing academic conversations about the role of pronunciation in second language acquisition (Saito, 2012; Derwing & Munro, 2015), the influence of FLA on learner performance (Horwitz et al., 1986), and the value of integrating communicative approaches to phonological instruction (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). By bridging these areas, the study contributes to the discussion on how phonological awareness training can both reduce anxiety and enhance interpersonal communicative competence—two goals frequently treated separately in EFL contexts.

This Master's report is organized as follows:

Chapter 2: Literature Review explores foundational theories and recent research on

phonological awareness, intelligibility, interpersonal communication, and FLA.

Chapter 3: Methodology details the qualitative action research design, participant selection, instruments used, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion presents the findings from pre- and post-tests, surveys, classroom observations, and field notes, highlighting changes in pronunciation and communication.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications summarizes the outcomes, discusses the pedagogical value of the intervention, and offers recommendations for future practice and research.

The overarching argument of this report is that integrating phonological awareness into EFL teaching can significantly enhance students’ oral communication by reducing FLA and promoting more intelligible, confident speech. Through structured and contextually relevant instruction, learners become better equipped to engage with English meaningfully in their social environments.

II. JUSTIFICATION

In the last two decades, there has been growing support in Colombia for learning a second language, particularly English. The National Bilingualism Program (NBP), established by the national government, aims to enhance foreign language teaching and learning in preschool, primary, and secondary education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2006). This initiative has led to significant investments in educational resources such as *Bunny Bonita*,

English Please, and *English Way to Go*, all designed to improve English instruction in public schools. Despite these efforts, many high school students, university students, and the general population continue to express a need to develop or improve their oral proficiency in English. This ongoing challenge suggests a gap between existing language programs and students' communicative needs.

High school English programs should align with students' communicative needs and interests, supported by research-based methodologies that foster phonological awareness. Developing phonological awareness has been recognized as a crucial component of oral proficiency, as it enhances learners' ability to distinguish, produce, and manipulate sounds in the target language (Yopp & Yopp, 2000). Research suggests that when phonological awareness is integrated into English instruction, students gain confidence in pronunciation and overall speaking abilities, leading to more frequent and effective language use (Gillon, 2004). Given the increasing presence of expatriates and English-speaking tourists in Colombia, particularly in Medellín, students could benefit significantly from improved oral proficiency, enabling them to interact more confidently with English speakers.

Medellín is currently undergoing a linguistic and cultural transformation, with the local administration striving to evolve from a "District of Science, Technology, and Innovation" to a "Bilingual District of Science, Technology, and Innovation" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2023). This shift is driven by the growing number of expatriates and English-speaking visitors, making English proficiency an essential skill for regional development. The strategic location of the school—just a few blocks from the Acevedo metro station, which connects to the cable system leading to Arví Park, a major tourist attraction—presents an excellent opportunity for students to

engage in authentic English interactions. By strengthening phonological awareness, students will be better prepared to use English in real-world communicative scenarios, thereby improving their interpersonal skills and increasing their employability in a bilingual workforce.

In this sense, this research project seeks to address the existing gap in English oral proficiency by focusing on phonological awareness as a fundamental aspect to build and achieve effective communication. By implementing phonological training in the English curriculum, students will develop better listening and pronunciation skills, leading to improved confidence and more effective interpersonal interactions with English speakers in their daily lives.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

Research Question(s)

Tenth-grade students at Villa del Socorro High School rarely used English for communication, either in or outside the classroom. Their participation was mostly limited to repeating information and failed to provide short, basic responses even when they were prompted by the teacher. This observation led to the central research question: How can the implementation of phonological awareness activities enhance oral interactions in 10th-grade students?

General Objective

To explore how the development of phonological awareness fosters the use of English in

oral interactions in 10th-grade students.

Specific Objectives

This project research specifically aims:

- To evaluate the current level of phonological awareness among 10th grade students.
- To design phonological awareness activities to improve listening and speaking skills.
- Examine the impact of phonological awareness activities on students engagement in English conversations, particularly in authentic scenarios within their community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In both academic and social contexts, the ability to understand and produce spoken language plays a crucial role in effective communication. Spoken interactions facilitate not only the exchange of information but also the development of social relationships and cultural integration (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010). Given the importance of oral communication, educators must actively foster speaking skills in the classroom, ensuring that learners have opportunities to develop their pronunciation and overall communicative

competence.

Second or foreign Language learning, particularly in the area of speaking proficiency, is influenced by various factors, including phonological awareness, exposure to authentic interactions, and individual learner differences (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Pronunciation, as a key component of speaking skills, is often categorized into segmental features (individual sounds) and suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm, and intonation), both of which contribute to intelligibility and comprehensibility in communication (Levis, 2018). Research suggests that explicit instruction in both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation can enhance learners' ability to communicate effectively and be understood by others (Gilbert, 2012; Hahn & Watts, 2017).

Phonological awareness plays a crucial role in language acquisition and communicative competence. For 10th-grade students learning English as a foreign or second language (EFL/ESL), phonological difficulties can hinder their ability to interact effectively in real-life conversations. This literature review examines key research on phonological awareness, its impact on interpersonal communication, intelligibility, effective pedagogical strategies for high school students and interpersonal interactions.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness refers to the ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken language (Yopp & Yopp, 2000). According to the phonological processing model (Wagner & Torgesen, 1987), phonemic awareness, decoding, and fluency are interconnected skills that contribute to language development. Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory

highlights the role of social interaction in language learning, emphasizing that phonological awareness should be developed in communicative contexts.

Studies indicate that phonological awareness directly influences pronunciation, intelligibility, and fluency, which are essential for effective communication (Bradlow, Akahane-Yamada, Pisoni, & Tohkura, 1999). Poor phonological skills can lead to misunderstandings, decreased confidence, and reluctance to engage in spoken interactions (Derwing & Munro, 2005). Conversely, students with strong phonological awareness demonstrate better listening comprehension and conversational skills (Field, 2005).

Authors such as Almeida (2018) described developing awareness of unknown sounds to improve merging and substitution pronunciation mistakes. In this paper, the author overviews recent findings related to pronunciation teaching. It established the importance of making learners aware of phonological aspects of the target language. The research emphasizes the importance of addressing sounds that learners find difficult due to their L1. This is important because the author suggested activities like minimal pairs and tongue twisters that train both listening and speaking skills. Focusing on unfamiliar sounds through listening and speaking activities can improve a learner's phonological awareness and lead to more effective communication.

On the other hand, additional studies show that phonological awareness training can improve learners' pronunciation and overall language proficiency (Zielinski, 2006; Gillon, 2017). Approaches such as minimal pair exercises, phoneme segmentation, and stress and intonation practice have proven effective in fostering students' awareness of English sound patterns (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Adams, 1990). Furthermore, explicit phonological

instruction helps learners develop self-monitoring strategies, which contribute to long-term pronunciation improvement (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Snow et al., 1998).

Phonological Awareness in EFL Learning

Phonological awareness is a metalinguistic skill involving the ability to consciously identify and manipulate the sound structures of spoken language—such as phonemes, syllables, and rhymes (Yopp, 1988). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, this skill is vital not only for reading development but also for listening comprehension and spoken fluency. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) stress that pronunciation is a communicative goal that requires intelligibility, which phonological awareness directly supports. By training learners to recognize and reproduce target language sounds, educators can enhance both their receptive and productive skills.

Lin (2015) developed a study about phonological awareness training for adolescent EFL learners: From research to practice. The article emphasized the importance of PA for EFL learners and provided practical tips for teachers. The article offered recommendations for incorporating PA training into the EFL classroom, including: Rhyming activities, Songs and chants, Oddity tasks (identifying the different word in a group), Blending tasks (saying the sounds of letters together to form a word), Syllable-splitting tasks and Peer tutoring.

Additionally, Studies on English language learning in Colombia suggest that pronunciation is often overlooked in public school curricula (Usma & Frodden, 2003). Consequently, students experience difficulties in producing English sounds accurately, which

affects their confidence and willingness to engage in conversations. Research indicates that phonological awareness training can significantly improve students' pronunciation and overall communicative competence (Foote, Trofimovich, Collins, & Soler Urzua, 2013). Additionally, fostering phonological awareness aligns with communicative language teaching (CLT) principles, which emphasize interaction and meaningful use of language as central components of language acquisition (Richards, 2006).

High school students learning English often struggle with phoneme differentiation, stress patterns, and rhythm, particularly if their native language has a different phonological structure (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992). Additionally, limited exposure to authentic spoken English and a focus on written literacy in traditional curricula may impede phonological skill development (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010). Psychological barriers such as fear of making mistakes further hinder oral participation (Tsui, 1996).

In that sense, it is considered the idea that students are required to get familiar with English language pronunciation. Research suggests that explicit phonological instruction, multimodal learning, and communicative practice are effective approaches to developing phonological awareness (Lyster, 2007).

Teachers of English as a foreign language sometimes assume that all it takes is listening to people saying words to get to know them. However, Explicit instruction in phoneme recognition, minimal pairs, and stress patterns helps students become more aware of the sound system of English (Baker, 2011). Drilling exercises, pronunciation charts, and phonetic transcription can be useful tools.

Intelligibility in second language acquisition

Intelligibility, defined as the degree to which a speaker's pronunciation is understood by a listener, is a key goal in ESL pronunciation teaching (Munro & Derwing, 1995; Levis, 2005). Unlike native-like pronunciation, which is often unrealistic for many learners, intelligibility is a more attainable and functional objective that prioritizes clarity over accent reduction (Jenkins, 2000; Munro, 2011). It is a key factor in language pedagogy, affecting learners' communicative competence, social integration, and academic success (Derwing & Munro, 2009).

In linguistic research, intelligibility is often distinguished from comprehensibility and accentedness. Munro and Derwing (1995) define intelligibility as the extent to which a listener correctly understands a speaker's intended message, whereas comprehensibility relates to the listener's perceived ease of understanding, and accentedness refers to deviations from native-like pronunciation. While all three factors are interconnected, intelligibility is the most critical for effective communication (Levis, 2005).

Research indicates that segmental (individual sounds) and suprasegmental (stress, rhythm, and intonation) features both play crucial roles in intelligibility. Suprasegmental features, in particular, have been found to have a stronger impact on comprehension, as inappropriate stress and intonation patterns can cause greater misunderstandings than mispronounced individual sounds (Hahn, 2004; Field, 2005). Teaching strategies that emphasize intelligibility include prosody-focused exercises, listening discrimination tasks, and communicative pronunciation practice, which help learners align their speech with listener expectations (Kang, 2010; Trofimovich & Isaacs, 2012).

The role of intelligibility in L2 learning has gained increasing attention in pronunciation

instruction and applied linguistics (Levis, 2018). Studies indicate that intelligibility, rather than native-like pronunciation, should be the primary goal of language instruction (Derwing & Munro, 2015). For example, Jenkins (2000) proposed the Lingua Franca Core (LFC), which emphasizes phonological features essential for mutual intelligibility among non-native speakers of English, arguing that achieving a native accent is unnecessary for successful communication. Similarly, Kang, Thomson, and Moran (2018) suggest that prosodic features, including rhythm and intonation, significantly influence intelligibility in L2 speech.

Other research highlights various factors influencing intelligibility, such as segmental accuracy, suprasegmental features, and listener familiarity with a speaker's accent (Bradlow & Bent, 2008). Findings suggest that intelligibility is dynamic and context-dependent, influenced by both speaker and listener variables (Isaacs & Trofimovich, 2012).

Beyond language learning, intelligibility plays a vital role in interpersonal interactions, affecting social integration and professional success (Kang & Moran, 2021). Reduced intelligibility can lead to miscommunication, social exclusion, and bias against non-native speakers (Lippi-Green, 2012). Research indicates that native speakers often judge non-native speech based on accent rather than actual intelligibility, leading to discriminatory practices in educational and workplace settings (Derwing & Munro, 2015).

Listener adaptation is another crucial factor in interpersonal communication. Studies show that listeners can improve their understanding of non-native speech through repeated exposure (Sidaras, Alexander, & Nygaard, 2009). Moreover, interactive communication strategies, such as clarification requests and paraphrasing, enhance mutual intelligibility and contribute to effective intercultural communication (Pickering, 2018).

Intelligibility is a central concept in second language acquisition and interpersonal communication. Research underscores the importance of prioritizing intelligibility over native-like pronunciation in language teaching and highlights the social and professional implications of intelligibility in real-world interactions. Future studies should explore additional contextual factors affecting intelligibility and develop pedagogical approaches that promote effective communication across diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Interpersonal communicative interactions and pronunciation

Interpersonal communicative interactions are essential for effective communication in various social and professional settings. Scholars have examined the dynamics of these interactions through different lenses, including linguistic, psychological, and sociocultural perspectives. Interpersonal communication is essential for language acquisition, particularly in second language (L2) learning contexts. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the role of social interaction in cognitive development, suggesting that communicative exchanges scaffold linguistic skills. Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis further posits that language development occurs through interactional modifications that enhance comprehension and production. Studies indicate that meaningful interactions promote phonological awareness by exposing learners to varied phonetic and prosodic features (Swain & Lapkin, 2002).

Effective interpersonal communication depends not only on grammatical competence but also on the ability to produce comprehensible speech. Poor pronunciation can lead to communication breakdowns, negatively impacting learners' confidence and willingness to

engage in spoken interactions (Trofimovich & Baker, 2006; Saito et al., 2016). Conversely, improved pronunciation skills contribute to more fluid and natural conversations, enhancing both social and academic communication (Derwing et al., 2008; Thomson & Derwing, 2015).

Studies have demonstrated that interactive and task-based pronunciation instruction improves students' communicative abilities (Gilbert, 2012; Murphy, 2014). Role-playing activities, real-life simulations, and peer feedback are effective methods for integrating pronunciation practice into interpersonal communication tasks. Additionally, incorporating technology, such as speech recognition software and pronunciation apps, can provide learners with immediate feedback and self-correction opportunities (Thomson, 2012; Levis & Sonsaat, 2017).

Social and emotional engagement in communicative settings also influences phonological development. Studies suggest that anxiety and motivation affect pronunciation outcomes (Dörnyei, 2005). Learners in supportive environments where they engage in authentic conversations tend to develop stronger phonological awareness and intelligibility due to increased willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Culture significantly affects interpersonal communication by shaping norms, values, and expectations. Hall (1976) distinguishes between high-context and low-context cultures, emphasizing how cultural background influences communicative styles. In high-context cultures, meaning is derived from contextual cues, whereas low-context cultures rely on explicit verbal messages. Ting-Toomey's (1999) Face-Negotiation Theory further explores how cultural factors influence conflict resolution and face-saving strategies in interpersonal interactions.

Foreign Language Anxiety and Phonological Awareness among Adolescent EFL

Learners

Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is a well-documented phenomenon that affects language learners' ability to process, produce, and interact in a foreign language (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Among adolescent English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, FLA is particularly influential during the development of phonological awareness—a foundational skill involving the ability to recognize and manipulate sound structures such as phonemes, syllables, and rhymes (Goswami, 2007). This relationship is critical because phonological awareness underpins both pronunciation and listening comprehension, essential components of oral language proficiency.

FLA typically manifests in three dimensions: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). These affective barriers can significantly hinder learners' willingness to participate in oral activities, impair auditory processing, and reduce exposure to phonological input—all of which are vital for developing accurate pronunciation and sound discrimination skills. For adolescents, who are especially sensitive to peer perception and teacher evaluation, this anxiety may result in reluctance to speak aloud or engage in phonological tasks, thereby limiting opportunities for practice and improvement (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

Pronunciation difficulties are among the most immediate consequences of high FLA. Learners experiencing anxiety may avoid speaking, which curtails the repetitive practice necessary for mastering the sounds of the target language. Moreover, anxious learners often struggle with listening comprehension, as anxiety interferes with their ability to focus and decode spoken input efficiently (Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999). These issues are particularly salient

during adolescence, a period marked by rapid cognitive and emotional development, making learners both more capable of complex phonological processing and more susceptible to anxiety.

To mitigate the effects of FLA on phonological development, several strategies have been proposed. Creating a supportive and non-threatening classroom environment encourages learners to take linguistic risks without fear of embarrassment (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). The use of communicative, collaborative tasks such as pair work, games, and songs can reduce communication apprehension while simultaneously fostering phonological awareness through meaningful interaction. Phonological training activities—such as rhyming, blending, and segmenting—help adolescents internalize sound patterns and build confidence in their speaking abilities (Gillon, 2004). Additionally, offering positive and constructive feedback reduces fear of negative evaluation, and teaching coping strategies can help learners manage test-related stress (Young, 1991).

Addressing FLA is essential for fostering phonological awareness in adolescent EFL learners. Reducing anxiety through strategic pedagogical approaches can lead to increased participation, improved pronunciation, and greater overall oral proficiency.

Foreign Language Anxiety and the Affective Filter

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) identify Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) as a distinct form of anxiety that arises specifically in language learning situations. It includes communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis provides a theoretical foundation to explain how emotional variables

such as anxiety may act as a filter that blocks language input. A high affective filter limits language acquisition, whereas reducing anxiety can lower the filter and increase learner receptivity. Baran-Lucarz (2014) supports this by demonstrating how phonological difficulties can increase FLA, and how explicit pronunciation work can reduce learner anxiety and foster participation.

METHODOLOGY

This research addressed some phonological activities to improve pronunciation during interpersonal interactions in the use of spoken English on tenth grade students. It focused on recognizing to what extent the development of these phonological activities favor the communicative skills inside and outside the classroom and how it relates to some other factors influencing the learning process such as intelligibility and confidence using the language.

Socio-Academic Context

This action research was conducted at Villa del Socorro high school, a public school located in Medellín, Antioquia. It is in an urban neighborhood called Villa del Socorro and it has an average population of three thousand six hundred students distributed in 3 branches. The main branch with students from 9th to 11th grade, and the other two with students from primary education to 9th grade.

The classrooms in the school are big enough for the amount of students, All of the classrooms have good lighting conditions. There is no projector in the classroom but one can be asked beforehand if needed. Students take classes in the afternoon and there is no fan in the

classroom, so sometimes (during summer time) classes can be complex for the students and hard for the teachers to work effectively under those circumstances. The school doesn't have an English lab and internet access is restricted for the students, on the other hand, there are no speakers. In terms of textbooks, the school has the editions provided by the ministry of education (English way to go and English, please).

Participants

The study was conducted with a total of 96 tenth-grade students enrolled in a public school in Medellín, Colombia. The school has 8 tenth grade groups. Five of those groups take classes in the morning and they were carefully selected for their academic performance to be part of the technical education program. The other 3 groups take classes in the afternoon and they are the ones who could not make it to technical education. These students were exposed to English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction as part of their academic curriculum, receiving approximately five hours of English classes per week. Despite this exposure, their engagement with and use of English in communicative interactions appeared limited because the school syllable appeared to be more grammar oriented.

To implement the study, a purposive sample of seven students was randomly selected to participate in the research. The primary rationale for selecting a small sample was to establish a clearer causal relationship between the independent variable phonological awareness instruction and its effects on interpersonal communicative interactions. According to Campbell and Stanley (1963), a control group is essential in research to establish causality, as it helps differentiate between changes that result from the experimental treatment and those that could occur naturally.

Similarly, Python (2013) emphasizes that comparing an experimental group to a control group allows researchers to isolate the effects of the independent variable, thereby increasing the validity of the findings.

The initial intervention began at the end of May and lasted for two weeks before students went on a 25-day vacation period. Upon their return in early July, they resumed their academic activities and were concluding the second term. During this period, many students were engaged in “refuerzos,” which are additional activities students take in order to not to fail the term and improve their academic performance or grades.

Upon initiating the study, it became evident that the students exhibited low confidence in communicating in English. When the researcher attempted to communicate in English, students immediately expressed discomfort and requested a switch to Spanish, claiming they were not accustomed to being addressed in English. This reaction aligns with Krashen’s (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that emotional factors such as anxiety and lack of confidence can significantly hinder language acquisition. Many students appeared uneasy and hesitant to engage with the language, even when aided by body language and visual support.

During the first two weeks of observation, student participation in English-based activities was minimal. When students attempted to use English, pronunciation difficulties were prevalent. These pronunciation issues frequently led to breakdowns in communication, as their speech was difficult to comprehend. As noted by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2010), pronunciation plays a critical role in intelligibility and comprehensibility, and poor phonological awareness can significantly hinder spoken communication.

A specific pattern emerged in students' reading and pronunciation behaviors. When

reading English words from the board, students consistently applied Spanish phonetic patterns, disregarding typical English stress, intonation, and phoneme articulation. This challenge aligns with findings by Swan and Smith (2001), who argue that L1 transfer can heavily influence L2 pronunciation, particularly when learners lack phonological awareness of the target language.

Despite being enrolled in a public school where English instruction was mandated for five hours per week, students demonstrated a lack of interest in learning and using the language. English did not appear to be integrated into their daily school routines, nor did it hold significant personal or academic relevance for them. This aligns with research by Gardner (1985), who emphasizes that motivation and attitude toward a language significantly impact language acquisition. Without intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, students may struggle to engage meaningfully with the language, reducing their willingness to use it in communicative interactions.

Methodology

This study followed the classic action research cycle outlined by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which involves the iterative phases of Plan, Act, Observe, and Reflect. This cyclical process allowed for responsive teaching and continuous adaptation based on classroom realities and student feedback.

The first phase involved identifying a common issue in the learners inside and outside the classroom: they struggled with accurate pronunciation and phonological processing in short and basic oral interactions or conversations, often affecting their confidence and overall communicative competence. These challenges were observed during oral production activities

and confirmed through informal diagnostics and reflections.

The participants were 10th-grade students from a public school in Medellín, Colombia. These learners are part of a basic English program and possess limited oral proficiency. Most had experienced English primarily through grammar-based instruction with minimal exposure to pronunciation or speaking activities.

Multiple qualitative tools were used to gather data. Pre- and post-tests, designed to assess changes in students' phonological awareness, specifically in their ability to isolate, segment, blend, and manipulate phonemes. Observation field notes: taken every two weeks, classroom observations were recorded to document student behavior, participation, and phonological development and student reflections where learners completed brief written reflections to express how they felt about the activities and their own progress.

The intervention lasted 10 weeks and was integrated into regular English lessons. Each week focused on specific phonological awareness skills:

Week 1: Pre test and survey

Week 2: Introduction and sound recognition

Week 3: Places in the city and phoneme isolation

Week 4: Syllabification and segmenting

Week 5: Numbers and money

Week 6: Describing places and minimal pairs

Week 7: Rhyming and blending with action vocabulary

Week 8: Communicative practice with place descriptions

Week 9: Giving and understanding directions

Week 10: Final reflections and post-assessment and exit survey

Activities included rhyming games, syllable clapping, minimal pair identification, and guided dialogues, all contextualized in familiar urban settings to support engagement and reduce anxiety.

Data were analyzed qualitatively to identify emerging patterns and student progress. Pre- and post-test results were compared to assess phonological gains, while observation and reflection entries were coded for evidence of reduced anxiety, increased participation, and improved phonological accuracy.

Research Type and Research Strategy

This study, aligned with its research objective, utilized a qualitative approach to explore and understand students' perceptions of their interpersonal interactions and language use before and after the action research. It also examined their experiences throughout the process and their views on the extent to which phonological awareness activities promote the use of spoken English both inside and outside the classroom.

Although pretests and posttests were conducted to assess the impact of these activities on students' speaking performance, presenting data through graphs, statistics, numbers, and percentages, the research remained qualitative in nature. The primary focus was on describing learners' perceptions of their experience with this innovative strategy.

Additionally, the development of this pedagogical strategy to enhance communicative skills in tenth graders evolved throughout the study. The research moved from specific observations to a broader understanding of the effectiveness of phonological awareness activities

in fostering interpersonal interactions. Therefore, the study followed an inductive approach within a qualitative research framework.

Time Horizon and Sampling Strategy

This study was conducted over a three-month period, beginning with a survey, a pretest, and observations documented in a field diary. The research process continued with the implementation of an intervention designed to address students' reluctance and fear of using the language in interpersonal interactions. Data collection took place throughout the study, incorporating observations, reflections, and student performance records. The study concluded with a posttest and additional field diary entries to assess the impact of the intervention. Given that data was gathered over an extended period while monitoring the same participants, this research followed a longitudinal approach.

Regarding the sampling strategy, all groups actively participated in the study and were fully informed of its objectives. Additionally, parental consent was obtained through signed written agreements. The participants formed a naturally occurring group, as they were part of an existing class, and the researcher also served as their English teacher. The study was conducted in their usual classroom setting, during their regular class schedule, ensuring that students remained in a familiar and comfortable environment. This naturalistic context contributed to the authenticity of the findings, as it allowed for a more accurate understanding of students' interactions, behaviors, and progress in a real-world learning scenario.

Data Collection Method

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions, language use, and the impact of phonological awareness activities on their basic interpersonal oral interaction, this study employed multiple qualitative data collection methods. The study began with a **survey**, whose objective was to gain insights into students' self-perception regarding language use and pronunciation, communication skills, and their experiences using English during interpersonal communication. A **pretest**, seeking to gather data related to a student's abilities to identify and manipulate English sounds in phoneme isolation, syllable blending and segmenting, rhyme recognition and production and stress and intonation. **Classroom observations** were specific aspects where an observer regarding the impact of the strategy was documented and finally, a **field diary**, in order to provide useful information about habits, challenges and changes in students as a result of the implementation.

to establish a baseline of students' oral communication skills and their comfort level in interpersonal interactions. Throughout the intervention, continuous observations and reflections were recorded to track students' engagement and responses to the implemented strategies. To assess the effectiveness of the approach, the study concluded with a **posttest, exit survey**.

Despite the inclusion of pretest and posttest results, which were analyzed using graphs, statistics, and percentages, the primary research approach remained **qualitative**. The emphasis was placed on understanding students' subjective experiences and perceptions rather than solely relying on numerical data.

Furthermore, the study was conducted in a **longitudinal** manner, as data was gathered over an extended period while observing the same group of participants. The naturalistic setting of the students' regular classroom environment ensured that findings accurately reflected their

real-world interactions and learning behaviors. The participants formed a naturally occurring group, and their involvement was voluntary, with parental consent obtained through signed written agreements.

By integrating multiple qualitative methods, this research aimed to provide a holistic view of students' experiences and the effectiveness of phonological awareness activities in fostering confidence and increased use of spoken English inside and outside the classroom.

Instruments:

1. Pre-test and post-test:

During weeks 1 and 10, 7 students took a phonological awareness test in order to identify their previous skills regarding the identification of English language sounds and determine the impact of the implemented strategy in the manipulation of English sounds in interpersonal interactions with classmates, teachers and English speaking people in general.. Given the big number of students, only seven students were randomly chosen as a sample. They were taken to the library because it was a more comfortable and quiet space, so they could reduce anxiety. The aim of the test was to assess students' current phonological awareness regarding phoneme isolation and segmentation, syllable blending, intonation, stress and manipulation and communicative skills by measuring student's ability to recognize and produce sounds accurately. On the other hand, identify specific phonological awareness challenges such as syllable stress and mispronounced phonemes and finally, to evaluate their current interpersonal communicative competence in basic interactions. The resources used to collect the information were a *Phonological Awareness Quick Screening Test* (appendix E and F) to evaluate

the phonological accuracy and communication. A word list and sentence prompts focusing on commonly mispronounced phonemes and short dialogue script prompts to simulate basic interpersonal real-life interactions and a basic interpersonal questionnaire. The day of the test, students were taken to the school library, because it is a quiet place and that place could ensure that students feel comfortable and know their results will not affect their grades.

The post-test (appendix F) was done during week 10. It was done with the same students who took the pre-test and at the same place. Students took the same test in order to determine whether after implementing the strategy, students were more aware of phonological nuances and the impact of it in their basic interpersonal interactions.

2. Surveys

During the first and the last week, students completed a survey (appendix C and D)that explored and provided insights into student’s interpersonal interactions, ideas regarding language use and expectations with the development of phonological awareness in the English learning process, their perceptions of the intervention and their own communicative abilities.

3. Field diaries

As part of the research process, field diaries (appendix F) were used to document key observations and insights gathered during classroom sessions. These diaries served as a valuable tool for recording significant aspects of the study, providing a means for reflection on both the research process and its overall impact.

Through continuous observation, the field diary helped identify which activities

students found most engaging and enjoyable. Additionally, they offered insights into how phonological awareness activities influenced students' communication skills, particularly in interpersonal interactions. By analyzing these notes, it became possible to assess the effectiveness of different strategies in enhancing students' linguistic abilities.

The observations (appendix G) were recorded every two weeks, specifically during the independent practice sessions. To ensure consistency and focus, the notes were structured based on the following criteria:

- Student's engagement: Students actively participate, show enthusiasm, and remain focused throughout the activity.
- Effectiveness of the activity: The activity successfully enhances phonological awareness and communication skills
- Interaction and Collaboration: Students interact confidently and collaborate effectively in peer activities
- Challenges and difficulties: Minor challenges arise, but students manage to overcome them with minimal support.

4. Classroom observations:

classroom observations allow the capture of naturalistic data about students' interactions and the practical application of phonological skills in real-time (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017). This method also helps in identifying patterns and behaviors that might not be evident in interviews.

Observations were conducted throughout the intervention to monitor students' engagement with phonological awareness activities and the application of these skills in basic

interpersonal communicative tasks. The observations focused on:

- Monitoring students’ phonological awareness in natural classroom settings.
- observe how phonological development affects interpersonal communication such as pronunciation, stress, intonation, fluency and confidence in interactions.
- Identify changes in students’ confidence and willingness to participate in discussions, classroom activities, role plays as well as starting a conversation.
- Students participation in phonological exercises: Including activities like rhyming, syllable counting, and minimal pairs discrimination and others.

During this stage, there were key areas to observe such as the phonological awareness skill. With the help of the observation template and the field notes, I paid attention to the pronunciation of individual sounds and words regarding accuracy, sounds blending, reduction and clarity as well as the use of stress, rhythm, segmenting and intonation patterns in speech. Regarding interpersonal communication, during the observation process and with the help of the template, it was observed Students’ ability to initiate, maintain, and close conversations with intelligible pronunciation, Participation in group discussions or pair work and their comprehensibility and fluency during interactions. Additionally, the observations intended to consider students behavior and confidence as well as willingness to speak in English (volunteering answers, engaging in discussions), the application of non-verbal cues (eye contact, posture, facial expressions), also understanding and respecting students' silent period. Given that there were 5 hours of class a week, observations were made once a week to ensure consistent data collection while minimizing classroom disruption.

During week 1 the baseline observation stage, where the teacher only Focused on

observing students’ current phonological and communication skills without intervention and collected data on participation, pronunciation errors, and interaction patterns. Once week 1 was ended, the implementation of the strategy continued with the development of phonological awareness and observation of student’s interactions.

From week 3 to 9, the teacher observed phonological awareness activities and their impact. Tracked progress in sound production, stress, intonation, and confidence and monitored changes in interpersonal interactions during group or pair activities. Observations were made during sessions to identify trends or recurring issues in order to compare data to note incremental improvements in phonological awareness and interaction.

Data Analysis Methods/Techniques

Once all the data was collected, it was organized integrating qualitative insights (observations, field diaries, and thematic analysis of surveys), the analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of how phonological awareness development influenced students’ interpersonal communication skills. The findings were then used to determine the overall effectiveness of the intervention and identify areas for further pedagogical refinement.

Methodological limitations

In the process of implementing the strategy, several limitations have been identified that may impact its effectiveness.

First, it is well known that public schools in Colombia face numerous challenges,

ranging from limited resources to structural and administrative constraints. One of the most significant concerns is time management. Given the multiple educational programs, projects, and extracurricular activities that schools must accommodate, ensuring the availability of the five hours per week necessary for the strategy's implementation is a considerable challenge. Balancing these time demands within the constraints of an already packed academic schedule requires careful planning and institutional support.

Additionally, student absenteeism poses a critical issue. The school's flexible policies regarding attendance can sometimes lead to inconsistent participation, which may hinder students' progress and engagement with the strategy. The irregular attendance of students not only disrupts the continuity of the learning process but also affects collaborative activities that rely on student interaction.

Another limitation is the overall time frame of the study. Although a standard school term lasts approximately 13 weeks, several of these weeks are allocated for exams, institutional events, and other academic commitments. As a result, the strategy will be implemented over a shortened period of 10 weeks. This condensed time frame may restrict the depth of language learning, potentially limiting students' ability to internalize new linguistic structures and apply them effectively in real-world interactions. Furthermore, the short duration may not allow for a substantial long-term impact on students' interpersonal communicative proficiency.

While the strategy focuses on developing basic interpersonal communication skills, there is a concern that this emphasis may not provide students with a broad enough range of communicative competencies. Real-life communication requires not only social and everyday interactions but also more complex discourse, such as negotiating meaning, expressing opinions,

and handling formal interactions. The limited scope of the strategy may leave students underprepared for diverse communicative situations beyond the classroom.

Moreover, a crucial factor affecting the strategy's impact is the limited use of English within the school environment. The lack of English usage among teachers, staff, and even members of the English department may hinder students' motivation and perception of English as a practical and relevant skill. If English is perceived as something confined solely to the classroom, students may struggle to see its value in their daily lives, reducing their willingness to engage in authentic communicative interactions outside the academic setting.

To address these limitations, institutional support, strategic scheduling, and reinforcement beyond the English classroom are essential. Encouraging a school-wide culture of English use, fostering student motivation, and integrating language learning into broader school activities could enhance the effectiveness of the strategy and contribute to more meaningful and sustainable language development.

Ethical Considerations

The study will adhere to ethical guidelines, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity for all participants. Students and their guardians will be informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent will be obtained.

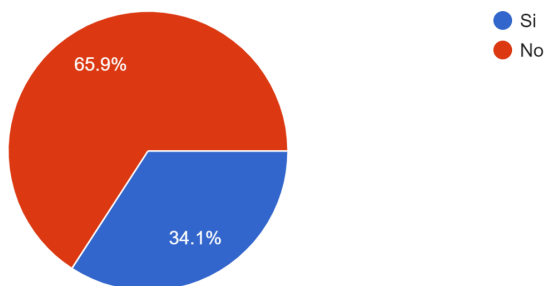
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results presented in this paper come from the initial survey, pretest, posttest, classroom observations and field diaries applied at the beginning, during and at the end of the

strategy implementation.

The initial survey provided insights into students’ self-perceptions of their English use, pronunciation skills, and communicative confidence. It also served as a diagnostic to identify areas requiring intervention. Graphic 1 shows that only 34.1% of students reported using English either inside or outside the classroom, while 65.9% indicated that they rarely or never engaged in English communication. This finding highlights that students’ limited perception of English interaction—such as simple greetings—is a significant barrier. It reinforces the need for explicit phonological awareness activities to expand their understanding of meaningful, everyday English use.

¿has interactuado en inglés dentro o fuera de tu clase?
41 respuestas

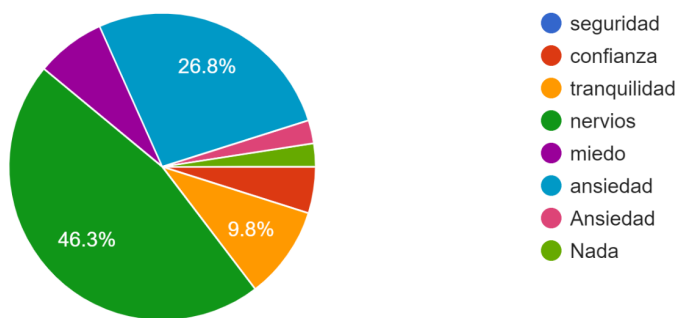


graphic 1

In terms of emotional response to using English (Graphic 2), 46.3% of students felt nervous, 26.8% experienced anxiety, and only 3% expressed confidence when communicating in English. These high levels of nervousness and anxiety emphasize the necessity of incorporating anxiety-reduction strategies within the phonological awareness training. As Krashen’s (1982)

Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests, emotional barriers significantly inhibit language acquisition.

¿Cuándo me toca interactuar en ingles dentro o fuera de clase siento
 41 respuestas

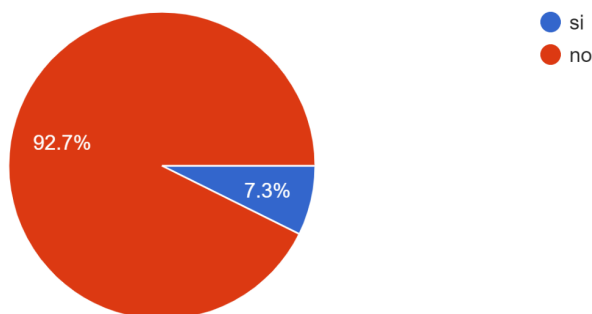


graphic 2

When examining students' comprehension of spoken English (Graphic 3), an overwhelming 92.7% reported not fully understanding what was said to them, compared to just 7.3% who believed they did. This suggests that phonological processing difficulties hinder students' listening comprehension, validating the focus on listening discrimination tasks during the intervention.

¿Cuándo interactúas con alguien en inglés, entiendes todo lo que te dicen?

41 respuestas

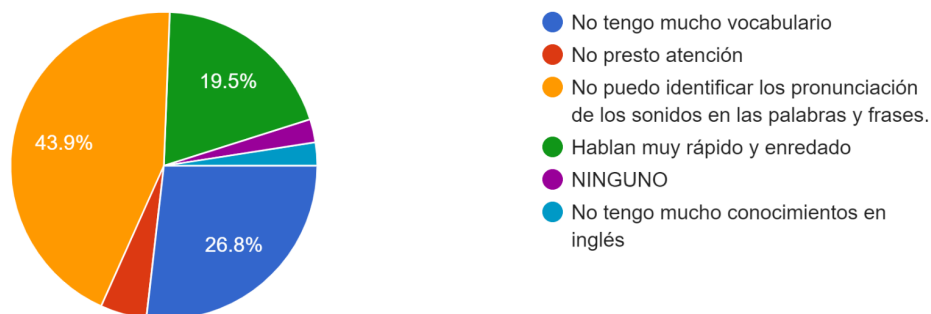


graphic 3

Further exploration into the causes of these comprehension challenges (Graphic 4) revealed that 43.9% of students struggled to identify sounds within words and sentences, while 19.5% cited fast speech as a major barrier. The difficulty with sound identification directly links to insufficient phonological awareness, highlighting the importance of foundational training in sound recognition and manipulation.

Si tu respuesta anterior fue no, ¿por que crees que sucede esto?

41 respuestas

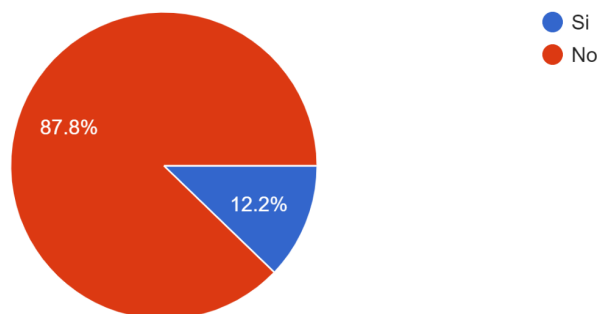


graphic 4

Regarding how students perceived their ability to be understood by others (Graphic 5), 87.8% of students felt they were not easily understood during English interactions. This underscores intelligibility issues, reaffirming that pronunciation—not grammatical or lexical knowledge alone—is crucial for successful communication (Derwing & Munro, 2015).

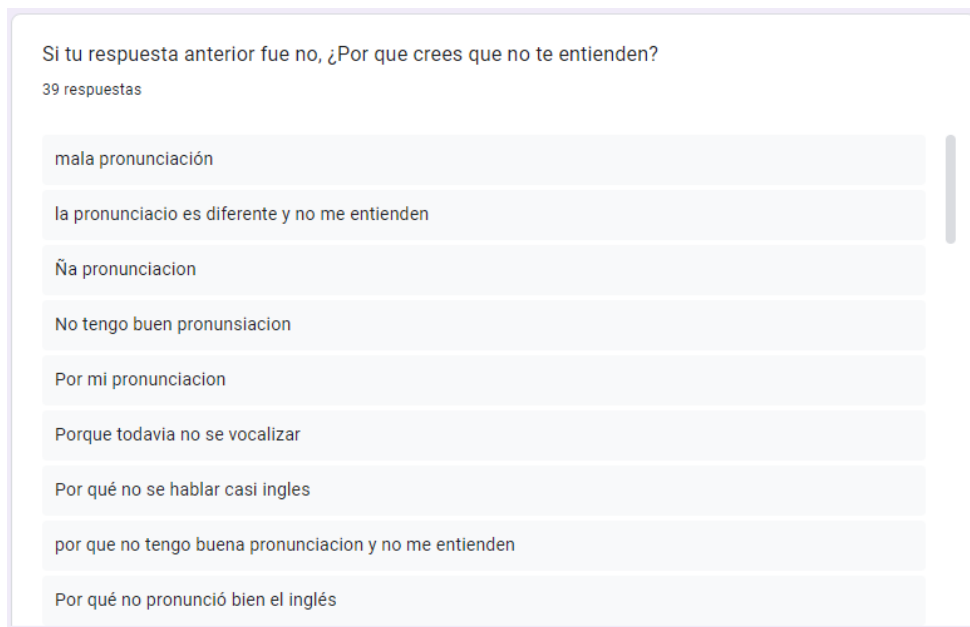
¿Cuándo interactúas con alguien en inglés, te entienden todo lo dices?

41 respuestas



graphic 5

In Graphic 6, when asked why they were not understood, students attributed the problem mainly to their pronunciation difficulties. This self-awareness supports the rationale for focusing instructional efforts on pronunciation to enhance both clarity and communicative confidence.

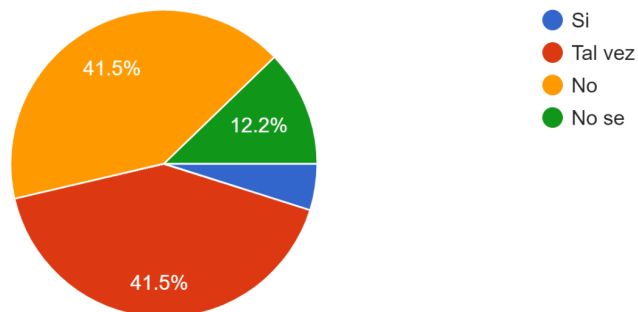


graphic 6

Despite 90.2% of students reporting encounters with foreigners (Graphic 7), only 4.9% stated they would attempt to initiate conversation, and 41.5% cited fear of mispronunciation or lack of confidence as reasons for avoiding interaction. These findings demonstrate that linguistic anxiety extends beyond the classroom and affects real-world communicative behavior, reinforcing the broader significance of addressing phonological challenges.

si ves un extranjero o extranjera, ¿te atreverías a iniciar una conversación en inglés con él o ella?

41 respuestas

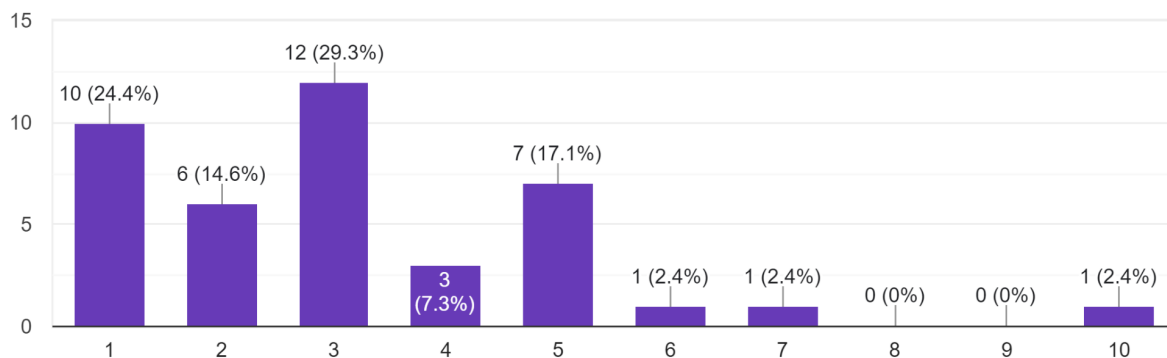


graphic 7

Self-assessments of pronunciation and listening skills were also low, averaging 3 and 3.2 out of 10, respectively (Graphic 8). These low self-ratings corroborate the pretest findings and highlight the urgent need for engaging and confidence-building phonological instruction.

¿de 1 a 10 cómo calificarías tu pronunciación en inglés?

41 respuestas

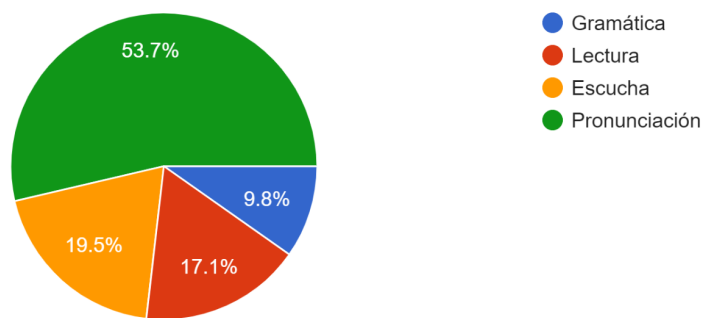


graphic 8

Finally, Graphic 9 revealed that 53.7% of students considered pronunciation the least addressed skill in their English classes, while 90% expressed willingness to receive targeted pronunciation training. Students’ eagerness for pronunciation support strongly validates the intervention’s focus on phonological awareness as a driver of both skill development and increased communicative confidence.

Según su experiencia aprendiendo inglés dentro del aula, califique el aspectos menos trabajados en sus clases.

41 respuestas



graphic 9

In summary, the survey results not only illustrate the students' limited use and understanding of English in authentic contexts but also underscore the profound influence of phonological awareness on both linguistic competence and emotional engagement. These baseline findings justify the need for a dual-focused intervention: one that develops phonological skills and simultaneously reduces foreign language anxiety to foster more confident and intelligible interpersonal interactions.

Pre-test findings

The phonological awareness pretest, conducted in Week 1, assessed students' baseline proficiency in recognizing and producing English sounds. It also evaluated suprasegmental features such as stress and intonation, alongside their ability to engage in basic interpersonal communication.

- **Rhyme Recognition:** Only three out of seven students correctly identified the majority of rhyming pairs. Common errors involved visually similar words that did not rhyme phonetically. This suggests a limited auditory discrimination ability, a foundational skill for accurate listening and pronunciation.
- **Rhyme Production:** Most students struggled to generate rhyming words, particularly when presented with less frequent or polysyllabic prompts. Difficulty in manipulating phonemes reflects low phonological flexibility, which impedes fluent spoken interaction.
- **Syllable segmentation:** While students were able to segment common two-syllable words, they showed significant difficulty with longer words. This aligns with research indicating that phonological complexity increases processing demands (Gillon, 2017).
- **Phoneme Blending:** Students demonstrated low accuracy when combining isolated phonemes into complete words, particularly when consonant clusters were involved. Blending difficulties can severely affect decoding skills, contributing to both listening comprehension challenges and speech production

errors.

- **Stress and Intonation:** Students’ speech was largely monotone, lacking appropriate sentence stress and showing incorrect intonation patterns, especially in yes/no questions and emotional expressions. This suprasegmental deficiency negatively impacts speech intelligibility and listener comprehension (Hahn, 2004).
- **Interpersonal Interactions:** Pronunciation difficulties and high levels of anxiety limited students’ engagement in communication. Most students restricted their responses to minimal phrases and avoided elaboration, with only one student voluntarily initiating conversational turns. This observation highlights how phonological deficits and foreign language anxiety intersect to suppress communicative risk-taking (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

Overall, the pretest results confirmed that students faced significant challenges in both segmental and suprasegmental phonological processing, with direct consequences for their interpersonal communication abilities. These findings validated the need for a targeted intervention focusing on phonological awareness to improve intelligibility and communicative confidence.

Posttest Findings

The posttest, administered in Week 10 after the ten-week intervention, assessed the same phonological and communicative skills measured during the pretest. The results showed notable improvements across all evaluated areas.

- **Rhyme Recognition:** Six out of seven students correctly identified six to seven rhyming pairs. This marked improvement in auditory discrimination suggests enhanced phonological processing skills as a result of focused training activities.
- **Rhyme Production:** All students successfully generated at least four correct rhymes, demonstrating growth in phoneme manipulation and vocabulary retrieval. These gains point to increased phonological flexibility and creativity in language use.
- **Syllable segmentation:** Students were able to accurately segment words with up to four syllables, particularly when kinesthetic techniques such as clapping were incorporated. This finding reinforces the effectiveness of multimodal strategies in supporting phonological development (Gillon, 2004).
- **Phoneme Blending:** Five out of seven students blended segmented phonemes into words with high accuracy. Notably, several students engaged in self-correction and used repetition strategies to enhance pronunciation. Such metacognitive behaviors reflect deeper awareness and control over their phonological skills.
- **Stress and Intonation:** Students exhibited a significant improvement in applying rising intonation in yes/no questions and placing appropriate stress on content words. Read-aloud sentences were delivered with increased fluency and clearer prosody. These gains in suprasegmental features contribute directly to improved speech intelligibility and listener comprehension (Levis, 2018).
- **Interpersonal Interactions:** Six out of seven students completed role-play tasks

successfully, showing greater confidence and clarity in their speech. Four students spontaneously used conversational fillers such as “well...” or “let me see...”. The emergence of such natural discourse markers suggests a growing comfort with spontaneous communication in English.

In summary, the posttest findings indicate that systematic phonological awareness training not only improved students' technical pronunciation skills but also had a profound impact on their willingness to engage in interpersonal communication. Students demonstrated enhanced intelligibility, greater self-confidence, and increased linguistic autonomy—all essential components for successful language use in real-world contexts.

Classroom observation and field diary

This study focused on observing and analyzing the impact of a targeted intervention on students' engagement and progress in English pronunciation. Weekly classroom observations and biweekly field diaries were used to collect qualitative data, offering insights into students' behavior, challenges, and development over the course of the intervention.

The weekly field diary provided rich, qualitative insights into the evolving classroom dynamics, student behaviors, and phonological awareness development throughout the intervention. During the first week, learners exhibited high levels of anxiety, minimal oral participation, and limited phonological awareness, often reverting to Spanish and avoiding pronunciation tasks. However, starting in Week 2, there was a noticeable shift in classroom energy as students responded positively to sound recognition games and multisensory activities.

This initial engagement laid the foundation for gradual improvement in phoneme isolation, particularly when vocabulary was contextualized with local references (Week 3). By Week 4, syllable segmentation activities like clapping and matching were met with enthusiasm, and cooperative learning emerged as a key factor in reducing anxiety and fostering peer support.

As the intervention progressed, learners began to demonstrate greater independence and confidence. In Week 5, although phoneme segmentation presented challenges, particularly with sounds like /θ/ and /s/, students persisted and requested further practice. The turning point became evident in Week 6 with minimal pair exercises, where students not only participated actively but also showed increased attention to sound distinctions and self-correction. This momentum carried into Week 7, where rhyming and blending tasks boosted motivation and vocabulary retention. By Week 8 and 9, students had internalized many phonological strategies and applied them fluently in communicative contexts such as giving directions and describing places. Finally, in Week 10, reflections revealed a significant reduction in foreign language anxiety, a heightened sense of self-efficacy, and a desire to continue improving pronunciation. Overall, the diary reflected a clear pattern of increasing oral participation, improved phonological accuracy, and affective growth fostered by contextualized, supportive instruction.

Engagement and Participation

At the start of the intervention, students displayed a noticeable hesitation to participate in pronunciation exercises. Many expressed discomfort and a lack of confidence, particularly in speaking activities that required peer interaction. Fear of making mistakes was a dominant factor inhibiting their willingness to engage fully. This was particularly evident during pair or group

work when students interacted with peers outside their close social circles.

However, as the intervention progressed, participation rates improved. The integration of engaging and supportive activities, such as pronunciation games and real-life simulation tasks, gradually helped students overcome their initial reluctance. By creating an environment where making mistakes was normalized and feedback was constructive, students began to take more risks in their speaking attempts. Group speaking tasks, in particular, became a platform where students felt increasingly comfortable practicing pronunciation in a collaborative setting.

Despite the overall improvement, challenges persisted. Some students found it difficult to balance fluency with accurate pronunciation, which often disrupted their flow during speaking activities. This was particularly pronounced when they were hyper-focused on avoiding errors. Additionally, a subset of students continued to experience anxiety, particularly when engaging in activities with peers who were not part of their close friend groups.

Several positive outcomes were observed throughout the intervention:

- **Increased Peer Collaboration:** Students increasingly supported one another by offering corrective feedback during pronunciation exercises. This peer-to-peer collaboration not only enhanced their learning but also fostered a sense of shared responsibility within the classroom.
- **Excitement in Engaging Activities:** Pronunciation games and real-life simulations, such as role-playing activities, were particularly effective in fostering engagement. These activities combined the elements of fun and practical application, making students more eager to participate.
- **Spontaneous Use of English:** A notable number of students began using English

spontaneously during class discussions and informal interactions. This shift indicated a growing sense of confidence and comfort with the language.

There was a significant shift in students' willingness to communicate in English. Approximately **50% of students** expressed that they felt confident enough to engage in English conversations outside the classroom. Furthermore, **30% of students** reported that they had attempted to use English in real-world situations, such as speaking with tourists or engaging in online interactions with English speakers.

On the other hand, the intervention also led to a greater appreciation of the role of pronunciation in effective communication. 80% of students acknowledged that pronunciation is a critical component of being understood in English. Moreover, 75% of students believed that their improved pronunciation skills contributed directly to their increased confidence in speaking the language.

The triangulation of data from surveys (Appendices C and D), pre- and post-tests (Appendices E and F), field diaries, and classroom observations (Appendix G) revealed a consistent and compelling narrative: phonological awareness training not only led to measurable gains in students' technical pronunciation skills but also significantly shifted their affective stance toward English communication. For instance, the pre-test results (Appendix E) indicated that only three of seven participants could successfully identify rhyming pairs, while post-test scores (Appendix F) showed that six students could do so with high accuracy. Moreover, the blending and segmenting sections of the test, which initially posed significant challenges, showed marked improvement—particularly with consonant clusters and multisyllabic

words—suggesting deeper phonemic processing. These gains are consistent with students’ self-reported increases in confidence, as captured in the post-intervention survey (Appendix D), where 75% of students reported feeling more capable of engaging in spoken English activities, compared to only 3% at the start. The field diaries and observations provided contextual validation: Week 7 diary notes highlighted students “voluntarily extending conversations” and using expressions like “let me see...” to fill pauses—markers of spontaneous interpersonal engagement. Similarly, observation records (Appendix G) from Week 9 documented that students previously reluctant to speak were now initiating interactions during group role plays. These aligned data points strengthen the claim that phonological awareness development supports both linguistic competence and communicative confidence, while simultaneously reducing foreign language anxiety.

Another emerging outcome, especially visible in post-test behaviors and classroom observations was the development of metacognitive awareness related to phonological processing. Several students demonstrated self-monitoring skills, such as pausing to repeat or reformulate a phrase after mispronouncing it, using peer correction supportively, or requesting clarification from the teacher. For instance, field diary entries in Week 6 noted: “Two students asked to rehearse minimal pairs again before presenting their dialogues,” while Week 9 observations recorded instances of students correcting their own intonation or rhythm after hearing a peer model. These behaviors suggest that learners were not only acquiring new phonological skills but also developing internal strategies to evaluate and improve their own spoken performance—an indicator of growing linguistic autonomy. This aspect is crucial in

fostering long-term communicative competence, as students begin to rely less on teacher correction and more on self-assessment and peer scaffolding. In addition, these metacognitive gains align with theories of reflective practice in language education (e.g., Ellis, 2009), reinforcing the idea that effective phonological instruction can lead to deeper, transferable learning habits beyond the classroom.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The intervention demonstrated that structured and engaging activities can significantly enhance students' participation, confidence, and willingness to communicate in English. The use of games, simulations, and peer collaboration created a positive and supportive learning environment that encouraged risk-taking and reduced the fear of making mistakes.

However, the persistence of challenges, such as fear of speaking with fluent English speakers and difficulties with specific phonemes, highlights the need for continued practice and tailored support. Future interventions should consider incorporating activities that address these areas, such as exposure to fluent speakers through guest sessions or virtual exchanges and focused phoneme drills.

Overall, the findings suggest that fostering a supportive classroom culture and using dynamic teaching methods can lead to meaningful progress in students' pronunciation skills and communication confidence. This has important implications for educators seeking to improve the speaking proficiency of English language learners.

Implications

The findings from this study highlight the value of embedding phonological awareness activities in the EFL classroom, particularly for adolescent learners who are still developing foundational literacy skills in a second language. Phonological awareness encompassing skills such as phoneme isolation, blending, segmenting, and rhyming, serves as a precursor to reading fluency and accurate pronunciation. In contexts where English is taught as a foreign language, this approach supports learners in bridging the gap between spoken and written forms of the language. Systematic and age-appropriate phonological instruction can foster better decoding skills, pronunciation accuracy, and overall word recognition, which are essential vocabulary acquisition and basic interpersonal interactions. This pedagogical shift suggests a need for curriculum planners and teachers to allocate time for structured phonological exercises, integrated seamlessly into thematic or content-based lessons.

The study reinforces the importance of learner-centered approaches in fostering engagement and improving retention of new linguistic forms. When phonological awareness tasks were embedded in interactive and collaborative activities such as games, group challenges, role plays, students demonstrated increased motivation and active participation. These formats allow learners to negotiate meaning, receive immediate feedback, and build a sense of community, all of which contribute to a more memorable and impactful learning experience. The positive classroom dynamics observed suggest that peer collaboration not only supports linguistic development but also contributes to a reduction in learner anxiety. Future instructional planning should continue to emphasize cooperative learning strategies that make phonological

practice enjoyable, meaningful, and socially engaging.

The integration of multimodal resources such as visual aids, movement-based tasks, songs, and hands-on materials was shown to enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of phonological awareness instruction. This approach caters to the varied cognitive styles and sensory preferences of EFL learners, allowing each student to engage with content in a way that resonates with their strengths. For example, kinesthetic learners benefitted from blending and segmenting activities involving physical movement (e.g., clapping or tapping syllables), while visual learners responded well to phoneme-grapheme matching games. Moreover, multimodal input provides essential scaffolding for students at differing proficiency levels, enabling more inclusive participation. These findings suggest that EFL teachers should plan lessons that combine auditory, visual, and tactile elements, thereby supporting differentiated instruction and equity in language learning.

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) emerged as a significant factor influencing students' willingness to participate in phonological tasks, especially those that involved oral production. Learners expressed nervousness about making pronunciation mistakes in front of peers, which occasionally hindered their engagement and performance. To address this, phonological instruction should incorporate strategies that directly mitigate anxiety such as creating a low-stakes environment, emphasizing effort over accuracy, and using humor or playful elements. Teachers can also establish routines that promote trust and psychological safety, including the use of anonymous participation methods, supportive peer feedback, and reflective check-ins. These practices help normalize error-making as part of the learning process and build students' resilience and confidence.

Future EFL interventions should assess students' confidence and anxiety levels

Finally, this study suggests the importance of incorporating regular assessments of students' affective variables, particularly self-confidence and language anxiety. These affective dimensions play a crucial role in learners' engagement and success in phonological tasks, and by extension, their overall language development. Instruments such as short reflective surveys, self-assessment scales, or teacher observations can provide insight into students' emotional states and help tailor instruction to their needs. For example, a learner with high anxiety may benefit from smaller group settings or individualized support, while a more confident student might thrive in a leadership role during group tasks. Future research and classroom interventions should therefore adopt a holistic view of language learning that includes both cognitive and affective domains to promote sustained engagement and growth.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of phonological awareness instruction and to mitigate the effects of foreign language anxiety (FLA) among adolescent EFL learners:

Expand phonological awareness activities with individualized support

While phonological awareness activities were generally effective in improving students' phonological processing skills, some learners exhibited persistent difficulties. To address these disparities, it is recommended that educators integrate more personalized and scaffolded support

mechanisms. Diagnostic assessments at the outset of instruction can help identify students who may benefit from additional guidance. Subsequently, differentiated tasks and one-on-one interventions can be implemented to ensure these learners receive the targeted assistance necessary to progress at their own pace.

Incorporate digital tools and gamified learning experiences

Sustaining student engagement emerged as a key factor in maintaining consistent participation and improvement. The integration of digital tools such as interactive pronunciation apps, online games, and multimedia platforms can enhance student motivation and provide real-time feedback. Gamified learning experiences, in particular, offer an enjoyable and low-pressure environment for practicing phonological skills, which can be especially beneficial for students experiencing language anxiety.

Implement structured strategies to reduce foreign language anxiety (FLA)

Since FLA can significantly hinder students' willingness to participate and their overall language performance, it is essential to pair phonological awareness instruction with strategies aimed at reducing anxiety. These strategies may include the use of peer collaboration, positive reinforcement, relaxation techniques (e.g., breathing exercises), and the establishment of a supportive classroom atmosphere where mistakes are viewed as part of the learning process. Teachers should also be trained to recognize signs of anxiety and employ empathetic,

student-centered pedagogical approaches.

Conduct longitudinal research on the impact of phonological awareness interventions

While short-term gains in pronunciation and listening discrimination were observed, further research is needed to examine the long-term effects of phonological awareness training on broader language skills, particularly reading and writing proficiency. Longitudinal studies would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how foundational phonological skills contribute to sustained literacy development in an EFL context.

Assess foreign language anxiety levels prior to intervention

A preliminary assessment of students' anxiety levels before introducing phonological awareness activities is recommended. This diagnostic approach enables educators to tailor instructional strategies to the effective needs of their learners. For instance, students identified with higher levels of FLA may benefit from a more gradual introduction to oral activities, increased peer support, or the use of non-threatening, anonymous response tools (e.g., digital response systems).

By refining phonological awareness instruction to include individualized support, integrating engaging technological tools, and addressing the emotional dimensions of language learning through anxiety-reduction strategies, educators can significantly improve students' language acquisition and literacy development. These recommendations aim to foster a more

inclusive and supportive EFL learning environment, where all learners are empowered to achieve their full communicative potential.

Further research

While the present study yielded positive outcomes in developing phonological awareness and improving interpersonal communicative interactions among tenth-grade students, it also highlighted several areas that require further investigation. They should aim to extend and deepen the understanding of phonological instructions within the real-world educational contexts.

The current research was limited to a 10-week intervention. Future studies should explore the long-term effects of phonological awareness instruction on broader language competencies, including reading fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and academic writing. A longitudinal design, spanning multiple school terms, would offer insights into whether the observed improvements are sustained over time and how they contribute to overall language proficiency.

On the other hand, given the limited technological resources available at the research site, future studies could investigate the use of digital platforms, such as pronunciation apps, speech recognition tools, or gamified learning environments, to support phonological instruction. These tools may offer immediate feedback, reduce anxiety, and enhance student autonomy, particularly for adolescents who are digital natives.

Additionally, this study focused on improving basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS). However, further research should examine how phonological awareness influences students' ability to engage in cognitively demanding academic interactions, such as giving oral presentations, participating in debates, or discussing abstract topics. This line of inquiry would be particularly useful for preparing students for standardized assessments and future academic challenges.

Also, teacher preparation emerged as a potential barrier to sustained phonological instruction. Further research could investigate the **impact of professional development programs** on teachers' ability to deliver effective phonological awareness activities. Exploring the training needs, perceptions, and confidence of EFL teachers would contribute to stronger institutional implementation and curriculum alignment

Finally, although some students began initiating interactions with foreigners by the end of the study, further research could examine how phonological training influences **real-life language use in public settings** (e.g., tourism, service encounters, public speaking). Ethnographic or sociolinguistic methods may be helpful for documenting authentic communicative events and learner behavior outside school

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IV. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.

Medellín, 2 de septiembre de 2024

Señor(es)
PADRES DE FAMILIA
Grado Décimo I.E. Villa del Socorro, sede principal
Ciudad

Cordial saludo,

Por medio de la presente, como docente de inglés del grado décimo, y estudiante de la maestría en enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en la Universidad ICESI de Colombia, quiero informarle y a la vez, solicitar su autorización para que su hijo participe en el proyecto de investigación “*Developing phonological awareness to improve interpersonal communicative interactions in 10th Grade high school students.*” que se desarrollará por 3 meses (de septiembre a noviembre) a lo largo de las clases, el cual tiene como propósito, desarrollar la consciencia fonológica para mejorar el uso de inglés en situaciones de habla con compañeros, docentes y extranjeros.

Cabe resaltar, es posible que se llegue a requerir en algún momento, el desplazamiento de algunos estudiantes a la estación del metro Acevedo, lo cual se indicará con anticipación, o en su defecto, se tendrán visitas en la institución de extranjeros residentes o que están de visita en la ciudad de Medellín, esto con el propósito de brindar espacios de uso del idioma en situaciones reales con personas de otras partes y generar un impacto significativo en el aprendizaje de esta lengua. Los estudiantes no estarán expuestos a ninguna otra actividad extracurricular dentro o fuera de la institución, ni su identidad o privacidad se verán afectados. Sino que, por el contrario, serán beneficiarios de nuevas estrategias para fortalecer el aprendizaje del inglés.

luego de haber conocido y comprendido en su totalidad, la información sobre dicho proyecto, riesgos si los hubiera y beneficios directos e indirectos de mi participación en el estudio, y en el he entendido que

- Mi participación como alumno no repercutirá en mis actividades ni evaluaciones programadas en el curso.

- No habrá ninguna sanción para mí en caso de no aceptar la invitación.
- Puedo retirarme del proyecto si lo considero conveniente a mis intereses, aun cuando los investigadores responsables no lo soliciten, informando mis razones para tal decisión en la Carta de Revocación respectiva si lo considero pertinente; pudiendo si así lo deseo, recuperar toda la información obtenida de mi participación.
- No haré ningún gasto, ni recibiré remuneración alguna por la participación en el estudio.
- Se guardará estricta confidencialidad sobre los datos obtenidos producto de mi participación, con un número de clave que ocultará mi identidad.
- Si en los resultados de mi participación como alumno se hiciera evidente algún problema relacionado con mi proceso de enseñanza – aprendizaje, se me brindará orientación al respecto.
- Puedo solicitar, en el transcurso del estudio información actualizada sobre el mismo, a los investigadores responsables.

Se firma a los ____ días del mes de _____ del año 2024 en la ciudad de Medellín.

Nombre del participante: _____

Firma del participante: _____

Nombre acudiente: _____

Firma acudiente: _____

¿Como padre de familia autoriza a su hijo a ser partícipe de esta estrategia pedagógica?

Si _____ No _____

Firma: _____ Estudiante: _____

Atentamente,
Yaniel Andrés Moreno Córdoba
Docente de inglés.

APPENDIX B.

Medellín, 5 de septiembre de 2024

Señor
JULIO HUMBERTO FERNANDEZ TRUJILLO
Rector
I.E. Villa del Socorro
Ciudad

Cordial saludo,

Por medio de la presente, me permito poner en su conocimiento que, como docente de inglés de la institución educativa y actualmente estudiante de la maestría en enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera de la universidad ICESI de Cali, quiero informarle, y a la vez, solicitar su autorización para el desarrollo del proyecto de investigación “*Developing phonological awareness to improve interpersonal communicative interactions in 10th Grade high school students.*” que se llevará a cabo con los estudiantes del grado décimo, contando de igual manera con la autorización previa de los padres de familia.

Dicho proyecto se desarrollará lo largo de las clases con el fin de fomentar en los estudiantes el uso del inglés y por ende un mejor uso y rendimiento académico en el área, a través de actividades pedagógicas y significativas para ellos.

Cabe resaltar, que como se expresó en reunión de consejo directivo, es posible que en algún momento se lleven algunos estudiantes a la estación del metro acevedo, o en su defecto, conemos con la visita de personal extranjero en la institución brindado apoyo a la implementación del proyecto. Como es de esperarse, cabe aclarar que para el caso de los estudiantes, ni su identidad o privacidad se verán afectados. Sino que, por el contrario, serán beneficiarios de nuevas estrategias para fortalecer el aprendizaje del inglés.

Atentamente,

Yaniel Andrés Moreno Córdoba
Docente de inglés.

APPENDIX C.

Survey: Phonological Awareness and Communication Skills

Objective: To gain insights into students' interpersonal communication skills, vocabulary and their experiences with interpersonal communication.

Introduction

Bienvenido y gracias por participar en esta entrevista de hoy. Hoy estamos aquí para explorar y comprender su conciencia fonológica, sus habilidades de comunicación interpersonal y sus experiencias con la comunicación interpersonal. Estamos interesados en conocer sus experiencias con el programa que vamos a implementar que se centra en el uso de la conciencia fonológica para desarrollar habilidades de comunicación. Recuerden que todas sus respuestas se mantendrán confidenciales.

- ¿has interactuado en inglés dentro o fuera de tu clase? Si ____ NO
- Con que frecuencia te comunicas en inglés dentro o fuera del salón de clase
Siempre ____ Casi siempre ____ a veces ____ rara vez ____ nunca ____
- ¿Cuando interactúa en inglés dentro o fuera de clase me siento
seguro ____ inseguro ____ nervioso ____ apenado ____ ninguna ____
- ¿ Cuando interactúas con alguien en inglés, entiendes todo lo que te dicen?
Si ____ No
- ¿Y a ti, te entienden todo lo que dices?
Si ____ No ____
- Si tu respuesta anterior fue no. ¿Por qué crees que no te entienden?
- Alguna vez has visto con tus ojos a un extranjero en el sector (barrio, estación del metro)
- ¿Has hablado en inglés con un extranjero?
- si ves un extranjero, ¿te atreverías a iniciar una conversación en inglés con él o ella?
si ____ No ____
- Si tu respuesta anterior fue no, ¿ porque no lo harías?
- ¿de 1 a 10 cómo calificarías tu pronunciación en inglés?
- ¿de 1 a 10 cómo calificarías tu habilidad para escuchar y entender en inglés en situaciones de conversación?
- ¿Crees que si tu pronunciación en inglés fuese mejor, te sentirías más seguro de comunicarte?
- ¿En tu opinión, cuáles son los retos de hablar o interactuar en inglés con tus compañeros, con tu docente o con una persona extranjera?
- ¿Has recibido entrenamiento de aspectos específicos de pronunciación en inglés? Si es así, ¿sientes que ha funcionado?

- ¿Si recibieras trabajo más enfocado en mejorar la pronunciación y la escucha, crees que te facilita interactuar o comunicarse con extranjeros u otras personas en inglés?
si _____ No _____ Tal vez _____ No sabe/no responde.

APPENDIX D.

La siguiente encuesta para estudiantes de grado 10° tiene un total de 9 preguntas abiertas, cerradas y de opción múltiple. Las preguntas se crearon con el objetivo de evaluar sus percepciones y progreso una vez implementada la propuesta investigativa sobre el entrenamiento de la conciencia fonológica.

1. ¿Qué tan seguido usas inglés dentro o fuera de clase ahora?
 - a. Siempre
 - b. frecuentemente
 - c. algunas veces
 - d. casi nunca
 - e. nunca
2. Cuando me comunico en inglés me siento...
 - a. Muy confiado
 - b. Confiado
 - c. tranquilo
 - d. ansioso
 - e. muy ansioso
3. ¿Sientes que después de las actividades sobre conciencia fonológica, tu pronunciación ha mejorado?
 - a. Si, Significativamente
 - b. Si, parcialmente
 - c. No hay cambios
 - d. No estoy seguro
4. ¿De 1 a 10, En cuánto calificarías tu pronunciación en inglés actualmente?
5. ¿De a 10, En cuánto calificarías tu escucha y/o comprensión en inglés actualmente?

6. ¿Estás más dispuesto a iniciar conversaciones en inglés con compañeros de clase, profesores o extranjeros?
 - a. Sí, mucho más
 - b. Sí, un poco más
 - c. Sin cambios
 - d. No estoy seguro
7. ¿Sientes que las actividades de conciencia fonológica ayudaron a mejorar tu capacidad para comunicarte en inglés?
 - a. Si
 - b. Parcialmente
 - c. No
8. ¿Qué desafíos aún enfrentas al comunicarte en inglés?
9. ¿Crees que seguir concentrándote en la pronunciación y la escucha mejoraría aún más tus habilidades de comunicación?
 - a. Si
 - b. No estoy seguro
 - c. No

APPENDIX E.

Phonological Awareness Quick Screening Test

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

TEACHER: _____ GRADE: _____

Rhyme Recognition

Say: Two words that sound the same at the end are rhyming words, such as **hat** and **sat**. Do **sit** and **bit** rhyme? (Yes) Do **chair** and **boy** rhyme? (No) (If the student appears to grasp the skill, do

the same for the following pairs of words. Put a check in the box to the right of the pair if the student answers correctly.)

- | | | |
|------------------------|--|----|
| 1. bed---fed (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 2. top---hop (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 3. run---soap (no) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 4. hand---sand (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 5. funny---bunny (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 6. girl---giant (no) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 7. fat - sat (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 8. cake – shake (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 9. fin – map (no) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 10. look – book (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 11. play – stop (no) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |

Rhyme Production

Say: I’m going to say a word and I want you to tell me a word that rhymes with it. (The answer can be a real word or a nonsense word.) Can you tell me a word that rhymes with **sit**? (Possible answers may include: **bit, fit, mit, pit, dit, jit**, etc. Put a check in the box to the right if the student answers correctly. Write down his/her answers on the lines provided.

- | | | |
|---------------|--|----|
| 1. pan _____ | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | |
| 2. cake _____ | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 3. hop _____ | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 4. see _____ | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 5. dark _____ | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |

- | | | |
|---------------|---|----|
| 6. candy_____ | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 7. toe_____ | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 8. bake_____ | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 9. more_____ | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 10. star_____ | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |

Syllable Segmentation

Say: I'm going to say a word and then break it into parts, or syllables. Say: **rainbow** (Say it normally and clap out the two parts in rainbow while saying each part.) Then say: **Rainbow** (This time, push up a chip as you say each syllable.)

Say: I'm going to say some more words and I want you to push up a chip as you say each syllable. (It is not necessary to clap the syllables again unless the skill needs to be retaught.)

Put a check in the box to the right if the child does it correctly.)

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|----|
| 1. sometime (2) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 2. basket (2) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 3. bedroom (2) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 4. fantastic (3) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 5. maybe (2) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 6. helicopter (4) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 7. teacher (2) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 8. fish (1) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 9. sunflower (3) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 10. caterpillar (4) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |

Phoneme Blending

Say: I am going to separate all the sounds in a word and I want you to say the whole word. For example, if I say /s/ /i/ /t/ the whole word is _____. (The student should say sit.) Let's do another example. If I say /s/ /t/ /o/ /p/, the whole word is _____. (The student should say stop.)

Let's do some more words just like this. (Read each word segmented. Put a check in the box to the right if the child says the whole word correctly.)

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--|----|
| 1. /m/ /e/ me | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 2. /b/ /e/ /d/ bed | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 3. /h/ /a/ /t/ hat | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 4. /m/ /u/ /s/ /t/ must | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 5. /sh/ /o/ /p/ shop | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 6. /p/ /l/ /a/ /n/ /t/ plant | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 7. /s-oo-p/ (soup) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 8. /h-a-t/ (hat) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 9. /t-ah-p/ (top) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 10. /s-p-oo-n/ (spoon) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |

Read the following text. make sure to use to have clear pronunciation and proper intonation.

Hi there! My name is Pilar. I'm 12 years old. I'm from Argentina. I have a dog and a cat. The dog's name is Luna and the cat's name is Tito. My favourite subject at the school is Physical Education. I love sports, especially football and basketball. In my free time I play computer games, the guitar and football. My favourite football players are Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale. My favourite basketball player is Manu Ginobili. And that was it.

Student A: Hello, My name is Charles, what's your name?

Student B: Hi Charles, My name is Robert. Nice to meet you!

Student A: Nice to meet you too. Where are you from?

Student A: I am from Berlin. And you?

Student A: Woow. I am from Colombia. What's your occupation?

Student B: I am a digital nomad. I work remotely and travel around different places.
What do you do Charles?

Student A: A digital nomad? That sounds interesting. I am a highschool student. I am in
tenth grade.

Student B: Nice! What can I do here in Medellin?

Student A: In Medellin you can do many things. If you like the nature, you can go to the
botanical garden.

Student B: Where is the botanical garden located?

Student A: It is located in El bosque neighborhood. Near Universidad metro station.

Student B: how much does it cost?

Student A: It costs nothing. It is a free

Student B: I love it! And what about the schedule?

Student A: not sure, but I think it opens everyday around 8:00am.

Student B: That's alright.

APPENDIX F.

Phonological Awareness Quick Screening Test

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

TEACHER: _____ **GRADE:** _____

Rhyme Recognition

Say: Two words that sound the same at the end are rhyming words, such as **hat** and **sat**. Do **sit** and **bit** rhyme? (Yes) Do **chair** and **boy** rhyme? (No) (If the student appears to grasp the skill, do the same for the following pairs of words. Put a check in the box to the right of the pair if the student answers correctly.)

- | | | |
|------------------------|--|----|
| 1. Ship - tip (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 2. dog - fog (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 3. ring - flat (no) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 4. star - car (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 5. red - bed (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 6. key - tree (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 7. house - mouse (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 8. cake – shake (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 9. fin – map (no) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 10. look – book (yes) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |
| 11. play – stop (no) | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | /7 |

Rhyme Production

Say: I'm going to say a word and I want you to tell me a word that rhymes with it. (The answer can be a real word or a nonsense word.) Can you tell me a word that rhymes with **sit**? (Possible answers may include: **bit, fit, mit, pit, dit, jit**, etc. Put a check in the box to the right if the student answers correctly. Write down his/her answers on the lines provided.

- | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| 1. book _____ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | |
| 2. sun _____ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 3. hop _____ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 4. day _____ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 5. moon _____ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 6. ball _____ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 7. fish _____ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 8. chair _____ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 9. more _____ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 10. star _____ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |

Syllable Segmentation

Say: I'm going to say a word and then break it into parts, or syllables. Say: **rainbow** (Say it normally and clap out the two parts in rainbow while saying each part.) Then say: **Rainbow** (This time, push up a chip as you say each syllable.)

Say: I'm going to say some more words and I want you to push up a chip as you say each syllable. (It is not necessary to clap the syllables again unless the skill needs to be retaught.

Put a check in the box to the right if the child does it correctly.)

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| 1. backpack (2) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 2. cafeteria (2) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 3. teacher (2) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 4. smartphone (2) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| | ☐ | | | | | | | |

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| 5. watermelon (4) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 6. metro (2) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 7. Medellin (3) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 8. fish (1) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 9. sunflower (3) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 10. caterpillar (4) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |

Phoneme Blending

Say: I am going to separate all the sounds in a word and I want you to say the whole word. For example, if I say /s/ /i/ /t/ the whole word is _____. (The student should say sit.) Let's do another example. If I say /s/ /t/ /o/ /p/, the whole word is _____. (The student should say stop.) Let's do some more words just like this. (Read each word segmented. Put a check in the box to the right if the child says the whole word correctly.)

- | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| 1. /m/ /e/ me | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 2. /b/ /e/ /d/ bed | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 3. /h/ /a/ /t/ hat | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 4. /m/ /u/ /s/ /t/ must | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 5. /sh/ /o/ /p/ shop | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 6. /p/ /l/ /a/ /n/ /t/ plant | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 7. /s-oo-p/ (soup) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 8. /h-a-t/ (hat) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 9. /t-ah-p/ (top) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |
| 10. /s-p-oo-n/ (spoon) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | /7 |

Suprasegmentals – Stress & Intonation

Read-Aloud

“Can you tell me how to get to the metro station?”

Stress Marking

Say each word. Ask the student to clap or mark the stressed syllable.

banana

hotel

computer

weekend

Medellín

Interpersonal dialogue Simulation

A: Hi! How are you today?

B: _____

A: Can you tell me your name and where you live?

B: _____

A: What can I do if I visit your neighborhood?

B: _____

A: That sounds fun! Thank you!

B: _____

Rubric for Dialogue Simulation (Score each 1–5)

Criteria	1 = limited	3= basic	5= proficient	Socre
----------	-------------	----------	---------------	-------

Intelligibility (can be understood)				
Pronunciation accuracy				
Use of stress/intonation				
Confidence and willingness to speak				
fluency and natural delivery				

total score (out of 25)

APPENDIX F. Field diary

Week	Thematic Focus	Phonological Focus	Notes
Week 1	Pre-intervention / Baseline	Diagnostic	This week served as the diagnostic foundation. As I conducted surveys and pretests with a sample of seven students, the atmosphere was tinged with visible apprehension. Students consistently avoided speaking English, often requesting to revert to Spanish. Even simple greetings or teacher prompts in English were met with blank stares or nervous smiles. Their affective filter was high—anxiety was palpable. Phonologically, students displayed significant interference from their L1 (Spanish). They read English words using Spanish phonetics, and speech patterns lacked appropriate intonation or stress. Only one student voluntarily initiated dialogue. Most responses were minimal or echoed versions of my prompts. Despite this, their openness in the survey responses showed

			awareness of their limitations. They recognized pronunciation as a major obstacle, and many expressed a desire to improve if given the right support. That glimmer of willingness became the anchor for the weeks ahead.
Week 2	Introduction to phonological awareness	Sound recognition	We began our phonological journey with sound recognition games. Clapping activities, tongue twisters, and visual flashcards introduced a playful tone to the sessions. There was a noticeable shift. Students giggled through initial attempts but gradually began to experiment with sounds. Most students responded positively to sound-focused games. Visual and physical prompts helped lower barriers. Some learners struggled to identify individual sounds, especially in initial positions. Increased curiosity was observed, and students asked more questions related to sounds. Although participation remained uneven, pockets of enthusiasm began to emerge. A small group confidently repeated after me and even corrected their peers. The classroom felt warmer. The use of multisensory tools—images, gestures, and rhythm—proved to be effective in lowering barriers. The diary entry this week captured a breakthrough

			moment: one student, previously silent, volunteered to say a rhyming word aloud. The class clapped for him. That encouragement became a motivator for others.
Week 3	Places around the city	Phoneme isolation	Connecting learning to their environment, we used vocabulary related to places in Medellín. Students practiced isolating sounds in words like "metro," "plaza," and "parque." Visualizing and contextualizing the phonemes through the city's map boosted engagement. Students responded well to pair activities. They identified beginning and final sounds in peer-to-peer drills. Still, certain phonemes (/θ/, /v/, /ʃ/) remained difficult. Laughter often followed mispronunciations, but it felt less like ridicule and more like camaraderie. I noticed improvement in their confidence when they worked with familiar vocabulary. The field diary captured how proximity to real-life references increased their sense of relevance.
			Clapping syllables brought rhythm into the classroom. We segmented words like “biblioteca” and “hospital” to develop awareness of English syllabification. Students showed enthusiasm, particularly during competitive games. Kinesthetic tasks helped most students grasp syllable concepts. There was

Week 4	Opening/closing times	Syllable segmentation	enthusiastic participation, especially in competitive group games. However, difficulties remained. A few students showed difficulty segmenting longer words. with longer or consonant-heavy words. I observed some frustration when attempts led to incorrect segmentation. Still, peer support was strong—students cheered each other on and repeated claps until successful. The field diary recorded a pivotal observation: one student who had avoided speaking began initiating turns in a group activity. Though quiet, her effort was evident. Her peer whispered encouragements. This confirmed that supportive dynamics were beginning to emerge.
Week 5	Numbers and money	Phoneme segmentation	This week focused on blending phonemes to form full words—an abstract task for many. Words like "thirteen" and "forty-five" posed a challenge. The /θ/ sound in "thirty" was especially elusive. Despite this, students were persistent. The diary reflects their resilience—several asked for extra examples or repeated the words with increasing accuracy. Using play money and market scenarios helped reduce cognitive load and introduced functional English.

			A highlight: one student mimicked a shopkeeper, blending words slowly but clearly: “Fif-teen dol-lars.” His classmates applauded his effort. The integration of role play proved motivating.
Week 6	Describing places	Rhyming and word blending	A shift occurred this week. As we worked with minimal pairs ("ship/sheep", "bat/bet"), students began self-correcting mid-sentence. This indicated developing awareness. They started to "hear" themselves more critically. Participation during peer feedback activities soared. Students enjoyed being "judges," identifying if their partner's word matched the flashcard. It was particularly empowering for less fluent students who could shine in auditory tasks. My diary notes captured a moment of spontaneous conversation: two students debated whether a classmate said "pen" or "pan." Their debate was in English—a first.
			Using rhymes and action vocabulary ("run/fun," "hop/pop") brought kinetic energy into the classroom. Students moved, pointed, and acted out rhymes, which sparked laughter and creativity. By now, the fear of "getting it wrong" had visibly decreased. The diary documents a dramatic

Week 7	Rhyming and blending	Rhyming and word blending	improvement: students played with language. They made jokes using rhymes and even created their own mini-songs. Blending skills still varied, but the majority could now identify rhyming sounds and generate responses when prompted. Motivation was at a high.
Week 8	Places to visit	Pronunciation in extended speech	In Week 8, pronunciation met function. Students practiced giving directions using maps of Medellín. Phrases like "Go straight," "Turn right at the metro" were practiced with increasing fluency. Observations showed clearer sentence rhythm and better use of rising intonation. While some still hesitated, most students completed the tasks with minimal support. Peer collaboration continued to flourish. The diary noted several students offering feedback to their partners—"Say it slower" or "Use this word instead." They had begun owning the interaction, which marked a shift from dependence to agency.
			This week featured full role plays. Students acted as tourists and locals, providing information about their city in English. The activities were scaffolded with prompts and vocabulary cards.

Week 9	Giving directions	Pronunciation of commands and connectors	Six out of seven focus students initiated conversations without prompting. Most maintained conversation turns and showed increasing fluency and clearer pronunciation. I recorded in the diary that one student used the phrase “Can I help you?” with a confident tone and correct intonation. His partner responded without hesitation. It was as if the classroom had transformed into a real-life English interaction zone.
Week 10	Post-assessment and reflection	Review and integration	The final week was bittersweet. Students completed the posttest and reflected on their growth. Several shared that they now felt more comfortable speaking English and that pronunciation was no longer “scary.” The posttest showed significant gains in rhyme recognition, blending, and intonation. More importantly, their interpersonal confidence had grown. They looked each other in the eye, initiated conversation, and took risks without fear..

APPENDIX G Classroom Observations

Classroom Observations – Biweekly Log

Project Title: Developing Phonological Awareness to Improve Interpersonal Communicative Interactions

Location: I.E. Villa del Socorro – 10th Grade EFL Class

Period: September – November 2024

Observer: Yaniel Andrés Moreno

Observation 1 – Week 2

Phonological Awareness:

- ☐ Most students lacked phonemic awareness; Spanish phonological rules were applied to English.
- ☐ Difficulties were noted in distinguishing initial and final sounds.
- ☐ Several students pronounced words with flat, monotone intonation and syllable-timed rhythm.

Interpersonal Communication:

- ☐ Students were reluctant to initiate conversations in English.
- ☐ Most responses were one-word answers or repetitions.
- ☐ Only one or two students attempted short phrases spontaneously.

Student Engagement:

- ☐ Participation in sound recognition games (e.g., clapping syllables, matching sounds) was hesitant at first but improved when games were introduced.
- ☐ Visual aids and gestures helped reduce anxiety.

Classroom Behavior:

- ☐ Students asked to switch to Spanish during English-only instructions.
- ☐ Laughter often masked discomfort during pronunciation tasks.
- ☐ Seating arrangements influenced participation—students worked better with familiar peers.

Observation 2 – Week 4

Phonological Awareness:

- ☐ Improvement noted in syllable counting and word segmentation (e.g., clapping syllables in “hospital,” “library”).
- ☐ Several students correctly segmented 2-3 syllable words.
- ☐ Intonation still weak, though more students attempted stress on content words.

Interpersonal Communication:

- ☐ In group activities, students began using full sentences with prompts.
- ☐ Some began asking clarification questions in English: “Repeat please?” or “How many syllables?”
- ☐ Pair conversations showed signs of spontaneous correction and support.

Student Engagement:

- ☐ High engagement during “syllable clap and match” game.
- ☐ Students became more competitive and encouraged one another.
- ☐ Frequent use of L1 when unsure, but peer help bridged communication gaps.

Classroom Behavior:

- ☐ Students were less anxious and more vocal during phonological drills.
- ☐ Friendly peer corrections created a collaborative tone.
- ☐ One student stood out for helping peers pronounce difficult words.

Observation 3 – Week 6**Phonological Awareness:**

- ☐ Students were able to distinguish words like “ship/sheep”, “bat/bet” more accurately.
- ☐ Self-correction during drills became more frequent.
- ☐ Accuracy increased for common minimal pairs; however, /θ/ and /v/ remained problematic.

Interpersonal Communication:

- ☐ Small groups began having short conversations with clearer pronunciation.
- ☐ 4 out of 7 target students initiated conversations voluntarily.
- ☐ Real-life simulation dialogues showed moderate fluency with scaffolding.

Student Engagement:

- ☐ High motivation during minimal pair games and “pronunciation judge” activities.
- ☐ Students laughed with each other rather than at each other.

- ☐ Students started to monitor their own and peers’ pronunciation closely.

Classroom Behavior:

- ☐ Less dependence on the teacher for pronunciation modeling.
- ☐ Student leaders emerged during group drills.
- ☐ Volunteering increased—more students raised hands or called out responses.

Observation 4 – Week 8

Phonological Awareness:

- ☐ Noticeable progress in rhythm, sentence stress, and rising intonation.
- ☐ Students used English speech chunks with greater fluency (e.g., “Turn right at the plaza,” “Go straight to the metro.”)
- ☐ Some students emphasized content words naturally in speech.

Interpersonal Communication:

- ☐ Students completed multi-turn conversations in pairs, using place vocabulary.
- ☐ 6 out of 7 focus students maintained role-play dialogues with appropriate pronunciation and interaction.
- ☐ Use of fillers (“um...”, “let me see...”) indicated growing confidence.

Student Engagement:

- ☐ Enthusiastic response to map-based activities and urban vocabulary.
- ☐ Students became curious about giving real directions—linked learning to real-life.
- ☐ English-only instructions were mostly understood without translation.

Classroom Behavior:

- ☐ Fewer off-task behaviors; students stayed focused during peer tasks.
- ☐ Emergence of supportive peer groups—students repeated directions to help one another.
- ☐ Students applauded peers for successful delivery of longer utterances.

Observation 5 – Week 10

Phonological Awareness:

- ☐ Strong improvements in pronunciation clarity, especially with sentence stress and rhyming words.
- ☐ Students showed awareness of when their pronunciation was incorrect and paused to adjust.
- ☐ Blending and segmenting of unfamiliar words showed considerable growth.

Interpersonal Communication:

- ☐ Most students engaged confidently in final role plays.
- ☐ Clearer articulation and use of appropriate intonation made their messages intelligible.
- ☐ Several students asked to repeat tasks—they wanted to “do it better.”

Student Engagement:

- ☐ High participation and pride in showing what they had learned.
- ☐ Some students shared that they practiced English at home or online.
- ☐ 3 students reported speaking to a tourist in basic English outside of class.

Classroom Behavior:

- ☐ Energy in the room was vibrant and supportive.
- ☐ Students smiled and clapped during posttest activities.

Positive atmosphere highlighted reduced anxiety and increased learner autonomy.